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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their May 2 news coverage on the scandal over two middlemen's embezzlement of US\$30 million that Taiwan intended to use in establishing diplomatic relations with Papua New Guinea; on Taiwan's President-elect Ma Ying-jeou's reiteration of his support of the 1992 consensus; and on Ma Ying-jeou being named by "Time" as one of the world's 100 most influential people. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the pro-unification "United Daily News" wondered how Ma is going to deal with competing pressures coming from both the United States and China while consolidating Taiwan's own sovereignty. Another op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" also questioned the direction of Ma's cross-Straits policy after he appointed pro-Taiwan independence politician Lai Shin-yuan to take charge of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), and the implications of the appointment for U.S.-Taiwan and cross-Straits relations. End summary.

A) "Embrace the United States, or Cooperate with China?"

Wu Tung-yin, a public servant, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (5/2):

"... The contradiction and predicament that Taiwan faces at the moment is that, on the one hand, [Taiwan] would like to maintain the status of an independent country; on the other hand, [Taiwan] would like to benefit from Mainland economic interest. However, it is difficult for the two to co-exist. After [Taiwan's President-elect] Ma Ying-jeou is inaugurated, he definitely will have to face a more significant decision, which is, when the Americans tell Ma's administration that 'I can sell you F-16 [fighter jets], will [Ma's administration] buy them or not?

"Once [Ma] accedes to the United States' request, it immediately creates the phenomenon of 'Taiwan making money from Mainland on the one hand and buying weapons from the United States to resist the Mainland on the other hand.' Can the Chinese Communists tolerate this state of affairs? Two days ago, AIT Director Stephen Young openly said that the United States 'is committed to ensuring Taiwan's meaningful participation in the activities of international organizations.' This move, although it doesn't really deliver anything [Ed.: the original Chinese was "like drawing a pie," i.e., an impractical attempt to relieve one's hunger], is apparently a U.S. active measure to cozy up to Ma's administration. ..."

B) "A Shadow is Following the Development of Cross-Straits Relations"

Chen Yu-chun, a professor in the Graduate School of American Studies of Taiwan's Chinese Culture University and a visiting fellow at Beijing Union University, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (5/2):

"... [Taiwan's President-elect] Ma Ying-jeou expressed his will to

visit the United States immediately after he was elected. Washington felt touched, although it put aside [Ma's wish] with the excuse that there is no precedent. U.S. Defense Department officials have said that the United States and Taiwan should strengthen military exchanges during Ma's administration and the United States wants to sell 60 F-16 fighters and six submarines [to Taiwan]. Beijing's military is highly concerned about this. Now, both sides across the Strait have said that they are willing to sit down and talk to end the hostility. If Taiwan continues significant arms procurement from the United States and deepens its connections [with the United States] in military and security affairs, how will both sides of the Strait talk about reaching a peace agreement? Ma once demanded that Beijing withdraw the missiles that were deployed along the coast [targeting Taiwan]. How would the Chinese Communists withdraw the missiles under such circumstances? The United States still wants to contain China. How Taiwan keeps equidistant from two strong powers, China and the United States, respectively, will be a test of the Ma administration's wisdom. It is necessary to understand that security issues are, in fact, political issues. Although it is probably fine not to touch [the political issues] in the short term, in the end it is still necessary to face [the political issues] in order to establish real, lasting peace."

YOUNG